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10/640,850

08/13/2003

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EXAMINER

WILKINS III, HARRY D

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1795

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

09/12/2008

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| Office Action Summary | Application No. 10/640,850 | Applicant(s) ITO ET AL. | |
| | Examiner Harry D. Wilkins, III | Art Unit 1795 | |

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 03 July 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 13, 14, 19 and 20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 13, 14, 19 and 20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 27 April 2006 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. 09/392,466.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 13, 14, 19 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mahoney (US 5,257,003) in view of Matsuo et al (US 4,324,702) and Atushi (US 4,988,648).

Mahoney teaches the invention substantially as claimed. Mahoney teaches (see abstract, figures, col. 1, line 22 to col. 2, line 32, col. 3, line 54 to col. 4, line 57 and col. 5, lines 52-57) a method of making a thermistor including stacking a specified number of ceramic green sheets of an insulating ceramic material, cutting the stacked ceramic green sheets to obtain individual thermistor elements, applying a resistive film material having a higher specified resistance than the ceramic green sheets entirely over the outer surface except the terminal end parts, baking the coated element, and depositing conductive terminal layers on the opposing end parts by a method including electrolytic plating.

Mahoney fails to teach that the ceramic green sheet compositions were selected to achieve a ceramic thermistor element having a specific resistance lower than 200 $\Omega\cdot\text{cm}$ and comprising as principal component oxides containing two or more metals selected from the group consisting of Mn, Ni, Co, Fe, Cu and Al.

Matsuo et al teach (see abstract and col. 2, line 49 to col. 3, line 22 and col. 10, lines 32-34) that thermistors having desirable low resistance could be made from various compositions, including mixtures of Mn, Ni, Fe and Cu oxides.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have made the ceramic green sheets of Mahoney from the ceramic composition disclosed by Matsuo et al because Matsuo et al teach that the disclosed compositions had excellent properties as thermistor elements including low specific resistance and high B-constant. Additionally, Matsuo et al show that the specific resistance of the thermistor was a known result effective variable based upon the composition of the thermistor element. Thus, it would have been within the ability of one of ordinary skill in the art to have selected an appropriate composition for achieving a desired specific resistance of the formed thermistor.

Mahoney teaches (see col. 3, line 54 to col. 4, line 57) that the resistive film (13) had to be a different material from the ceramic material of the ceramic green sheets, and that it was not critical what material was used, as long as it provided sufficient resistance to prevent the electrodes from interacting with the thermistor through any surface besides the terminal ends, thereby increasing uniformity of the thermistor element. Thus, the resistive film had a specific higher resistance than the ceramic green sheets.

Atushi teach (see abstract and col.2, lines 24-63) a composite ceramic material with dispersed metal powders that was known to be useful in electronic devices because of its excellent heat resistance, corrosion resistance and mechanical properties

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while exhibiting excellent electrical characteristics. The composite material included ceramic material containing oxides of aluminum, nickel, cobalt and iron (ferrite), and metal powder containing metals such as iron (see "(4) Sintered Composite").

Therefore, it would have been within the ability of one of ordinary skill in the art to have selected the material of Atushi for the outer resistive film (13) because Atushi teaches that the material had improved corrosion resistance, thermal resistance and wear resistance, thereby increasing the lifetime of anything coated by the material.

Matsuo et al and Atushi teach materials for the ceramic green sheets and the high resistance coating layer that have at least 10% of the same principal components, namely Ni and Fe oxides.

Regarding claim 14, Matsuo et al teach (abstract and col. 2, line 49 to col. 3, line 22 and col. 10, lines 32-34) that the thermistor element be made of a material comprising oxides of Mn, Ni, Fe and Cu. Atushi teaches (see col. 2, lines 24-63) that the composite material be made from oxides of Fe, Al, Ni and Co. Thus, the two materials share the same principal components, namely oxides of Fe.

Regarding claims 19 and 20, Mahoney teaches that, with respect to figures 4-6, the conductive terminals (14) were coated onto the thermistor by electroless plating. Electroless plating occurs by chemical reduction of a material in a liquid by an oxidizing agent also present in the liquid, and exhibits no preferential deposition characteristics. As is noted above, Mahoney contemplates electroplating for applying the conductive terminals. One of ordinary skill in the art was aware that electroplating preferentially deposits material onto charged conductive surfaces, and would, thus, preferentially

deposit on the exposed conductive green sheets as opposed to the higher resistance coating layer.

Response to Arguments

3. Applicant's arguments filed 3 July 2008 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant has argued that

a. Atushi does not relate to formation of coatings on a substrate.

In response, Atushi teaches forming a block by pressing of a composition into a shape and then sintering to achieve a dense final composition. Although Atushi teaches formation of independent objects, the entirety of the prior art, particularly including Mahoney, would suggest formation of the coated thermistor element having the composition of Matsuo et al for the thermistor elements and the composition of Atushi for the outer coating, and then sintering the entire structure at the same time.

b. There is no description in Matsuo et al and Atushi regarding the resistance values of the two materials.

In response, routine experimentation would have been performed by one of ordinary skill in the art to determine the resistance values of Matsuo et al and Atushi to determine if they were suitable for use in the process of Mahoney.

c. The present invention achieves various advantages including prevention of plating on the outer coating layer due to the higher resistance of the outer coating layer.

In response, Mahoney teaches the exact same feature of requiring higher resistance in the outer coating layer. Selection of a suitable composition for the

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thermistor element and the outer coating layer is considered to be within the ordinary level of skill in the art absent a showing of some unexpected result achieved by using the specific claimed composition. To date, no evidence of such an unexpected result has been shown by Applicant.

Conclusion

4. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Harry D. Wilkins, III whose telephone number is 571-272-1251. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:30am-5:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Susy Tsang-Foster can be reached on 571-272-1293. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

/Harry D Wilkins, III/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1795

hdw